



USS KEARSARGE (LHD 3)
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November 24, 2007

Kearsarge Assists Bangladesh in Relief Efforts

From USS Kearsarge Public Affairs

ABOARD USS KEARSARGE, at sea – Senior members from the Bangladeshi armed services and government, the United States Agency for International Development and U.S. Embassy met Nov. 24 on board the amphibious assault ship USS Kearsarge (LHD 3) to discuss how the ship and its embarked 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) could best support on-going humanitarian relief efforts in Bangladesh following the devastation caused last week by Tropical Cyclone Sidr.

“Our deepest sympathies go out to the victims of Tropical Cyclone Sidr,” said Capt. James Gregorski, Kearsarge’s Commanding Officer. “The multipurpose capability of Kearsarge gives us the ability to provide disaster relief by air via helicopter or sea via LCAC (landing craft air cushion). The crew worked hard to move Kearsarge over three thousand miles to arrive on Thanksgiving day to be in a position to best assist in the efforts that had already begun by the government of Bangladesh. Sailors and Marines are eager to help ease the burden of this tragedy.”

Key leaders attending the meeting Saturday included Brig. Gen. Ronald Bailey, Deputy Commanding General, III Marine Expeditionary Force/Commanding General, 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade, Geeta Pasi, U.S. Charge’ d’ Affairs ad interim of

Bangladesh, Denise Rollins from the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, Rear Adm. Carol Pottenger, Commander, Task Force 76; Capt. Robert Bougher, Commander, Kearsarge Strike Group; Col. Douglas Stilwell, Commanding Officer, 22nd MEU (Special Operations Capable) Gregorski and several high ranking Bangladesh Army officers.

“It was a great opportunity for U.S. and Bangladeshi leaders to witness first hand the capabilities of Kearsarge and 22nd MEU (SOC),” said Lt. Cmdr. Mike Smith, Assistant Operations Officer, Kearsarge Strike Group. “It was also an opportunity for Bangladesh to determine out how best to incorporate U.S. naval capability ashore.”

Smith said Kearsarge and the 22nd MEU (SOC) plan to use a CH-53 Super Stallion helicopter, with a lift capacity of 200,000 pounds, a CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter (40,000 pounds) and an SH-60 Seahawk helicopter (20,000 pounds) to transport supplies. They also plan to use an LCAC, which has the capability of moving up to 825 tons of aid per day.

Also, during their visit to Kearsarge, the ship’s guests were taken on a tour of Kearsarge’s hangar bay, well deck, bridge and medical facilities.

Kearsarge reported for duty to assist in Bangladeshi humanitarian relief efforts on Thanksgiving Day and immediately began to transfer bottles of water ashore.

Kearsarge is the flagship of the Kearsarge Strike Group, on a regularly scheduled deployment and departed its home port of Norfolk, Va. July 30.